

Red Flag Tip Sheet: High-risk Entities Co-located with Russian Research Institutes

Following the increasing prevalence of Russian chemical weapons attacks in recent years, Sayari has conducted an investigation into several scientific research institutes and production facilities in Russia. These entities have long been believed to be involved in the development and manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. As part of this investigation, Sayari identified multiple instances of commercial and private entities sharing addresses with these institutes' facilities.

The purpose of this red flag typology briefing is to provide foreign partners with valuable insight into the corporate networks and functions of research institutes in Russia. This examination of instances of co-location aims to highlight the specific risks these commercial entities may represent.

Co-located research institutes: GosNIIOKhT, GITOS and Khimprom PJSC

There are instances of multiple high-risk scientific research institutes that are registered at the same addresses in Russia.

One of the high-risk facilities, the State Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Technology (GosNIIOKhT), is formally headquartered in Moscow. The research institute was [instrumental in the development](#) of the Novichok nerve agent used in both the Salisbury poisonings and the recent poisoning of Russian opposition figure Alexey Navalny. In addition to its headquarters in Moscow, GosNIIOKhT maintains two branches: one in Shikhany, a town in the Saratov Oblast, and another in Novocheboksarsk, a city in the Chuvash Republic.

Consolidation of Research Institutes

GosNIIOKhT's branch in Shikhany is located in the facilities that formerly comprised the State Institute of Technology of Organic Synthesis (GITOS). In the Soviet Union, GITOS was an active player in the country's chemical weapons program. More specifically, GITOS was home to the manufacturing of various poisons and nerve agents, including the Novichok. Following administrative changes to GITOS's corporate structure in 2005, the institute officially became part of GosNIIOKhT, and currently functions as its branch in Shikhany.

Shared Addresses with Commercial Entities

In a similar structural manner, GosNIIOKhT's branch in Novocheboksarsk shares its address with three additional entities, Khimprom PJSC, FMC Volga JSC and Percarbonat LLC.

Khimprom PJSC, one of Russia's largest producers of dual-use chemicals, which is co-located with GosNIIOKhT's branch, has an upstream link through its majority shareholder to sanctioned Russian oligarch, Viktor Vekselberg. The U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) [sanctioned Vekselberg in 2018](#) for his involvement and operations in Russia's energy sector.

The other two entities are likewise involved in the chemical production space. FMC Volga JSC is a joint-venture between Khimprom PJSC and the American chemical producer FMC Corporation. Percarbonat LLC is a Russian producer of sodium percarbonate — an ingredient in synthetic detergents, bleaches and other household chemicals.

Entities or branches co-located with Russian institutes can be part of larger networks of entities functioning for the same purpose. For example, while GosNIIOKhT itself is included on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security's [Entity List](#), the entities co-located at its Novocheboksarsk branch are not. This significantly increases the risks associated with trading potential precursor or dual-use materials with these entities, as those materials could actually end up with GosNIIOKhT.